



Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

Advanced Systems & Concepts

SUCCESS STORY

Soldiers Train with LASER ACTD's Automated Translator



Soldiers bound for Afghanistan and those already in Kosovo use an automated Voice Response Translator from the LASER ACTD

U.S. soldiers are training with the Voice Response Translator from the Language And Speech Exploitation Resources (LASER) ACTD project, conducted in partnership with the U.S. Pacific Command, Army, and intelligence community.

In deployed areas, U.S. warfighters often use interpreters to help communicate with locals. However, there are times when interpreters can't help. In Iraq, for example, when U.S. warfighters tactically enter a building, their interpreters remained outside until the building is secured. In Kosovo, U.S. forces may have a Serbian interpreter, but encounter Albanian-speaking people.

Users speak English commands into a microphone headset, which are recognized and repeated by a small pocket-size computer and speaker combination. It then broadcasts the command in another language. The translators can respond to eight users' voices and translate more than 350 phrases in 18 languages, including Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and Pashtun. The device also works hands-free and eyes-free so operators can maintain weapons readiness and eye contact with people they encounter.

Soldiers in the 10th Mountain Division are training with the Voice Response Translator in conjunction with Tasers and other non-lethal weapons. Together, they are seen as reducing serious injuries, particularly when entering buildings and encountering aggressive occupants. For more information, see <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=52065>. Soldiers in Kosovo's Force 10 also have received training on the Voice Response Translator, with 17 made available for use across its subordinate task forces. In Kosovo, the device is seen as helping at traffic checkpoints and crowd control. For more, see <http://www.tffalcon.hqusareur.army.mil/PDFs/10/KFOR10NOV2008.pdf>

For more information on the ACTD/JCTD program, visit: www.acq.osd.mil/jctd/.